

REMARKS

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Dunwoody for the courtesies extended to Applicants' undersigned representative during the telephone interview on August 25, 2006.

Claims 1-6 were rejected in an Office Action dated August 1, 2006. Claims 7-15 have been added, claim 1 has been amended, and claim 6 has been canceled in the instant response. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the following remarks.

Rejections under 35 USC §112

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Claim 1 has been amended to remove the subject matter inserted in Applicants' response dated May 24, 2006, and on which this rejection is based. Claim 7 has been canceled. Applicants intend the inflatable article to be functionally recited. Cancellation of claim 7 and the amendment to claim 1 should render moot this rejection. Thus, the claim amendment removing the phrase "inserted into the inflatable article" is for purposes of clarity only and not for obviousness or anticipation in view of any cited art.

Rejections under 35 USC §103

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 2,180,960, Kennedy in view of US Patent No. 5,649,860, Giuffrida.

The claims as amended are clearly distinguishable over Kennedy. Kennedy does not disclose or suggest a low-profile connector assembly having an external section and an insertable section being connected and oriented at an angle of less than 180 degrees, or at a substantially right angle, with respect to each other to provide a continuous air passageway configured to pass through a bend. The orientation of the insertable and external sections at an angle provides a desirable low profile to the inflatable article.

In contrast, all of the figures of Kennedy depict a straight fluid passage. At col. 2, Kennedy discloses a nipple structure formed of "rigid material... provided with a longitudinally extended bore (11) therethrough defining a passageway". There is no disclosure or suggestion of a passageway having an angled configuration.

See also col. 2, lines 13-17 where Kennedy refers to the member having a shank and the axis of the shank. There is no recognition of the need for a low profile assembly in Kennedy, nor is there a disclosure or suggestion of an air passage way passing through a bend. The claimed invention, as amended, is therefore neither disclosed nor suggested; removal of the rejection under §103(a) is therefore requested.

The claimed invention as amended, and in the newly presented claims having the features of a pressure relief valve comprising a pressure relief opening, a valve material covering the pressure relief opening, a valve material in the form of an elastic tube, comprising a longitudinal slit, and forming an air channel, is not disclosed or suggested by the cited references, either alone or in combination.

For the reasons set forth in Applicants' response of May 24, 2006, the rejection of the claims under §103(a) as obvious over Kennedy in view of Giuffrida is traversed. In the Office Action it is stated that "it would have been obvious...to fabricate the connector assembly with a pressure relief valve to vary the passage section of the fluid through the connector assembly as the difference in the pressure between the inside of the hollow body and the outside varies, as taught by" Giuffrida.

Kennedy does not recognize the need for pressure relief, or discuss pressure losses, energy consumption or flow regulation, which are the objects of the invention of Giuffrida (col. 1-2). Thus, no motivation for modifying the nipple structure of Kennedy is provided by the references.

Moreover, there is no teaching or suggestion of how to modify the nipple structure disclosed by Kennedy with the various outlets of Giuffrida to get to the claimed invention. Thus, a prima facie case of obviousness has not been established.

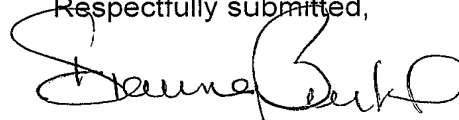
At col. 2, lines 50-64, and Fig.2a, Giuffrida states that where the hollow body is a rigid tubular body (as is Kennedy), a sheet, made of elastically flexible material in which the delivery outlet is formed, will be provided. Neither reference, therefore, discloses or suggests a connector assembly having a combination of an insertable section and an external section configured to form a continuous air passageway therethrough which extends from an external opening and into an inflatable article, and further comprising a pressure relief valve formed on the external section. There is no teaching of how to combine the references in a manner which renders obvious the presently claimed invention.

Patentability of the claims in view of the cited references has been established and removal of the rejection under §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the present invention as defined by the claims is neither taught nor suggested by any of the references of record.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dianne Burkhard", written over the typed name.

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